

# Canada's Great West Iddings

Charles Mair



# OBSERVATIONS

## CANADA'S GREAT WEST

JOHN A. HARRIS

BY JOHN A. HARRIS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

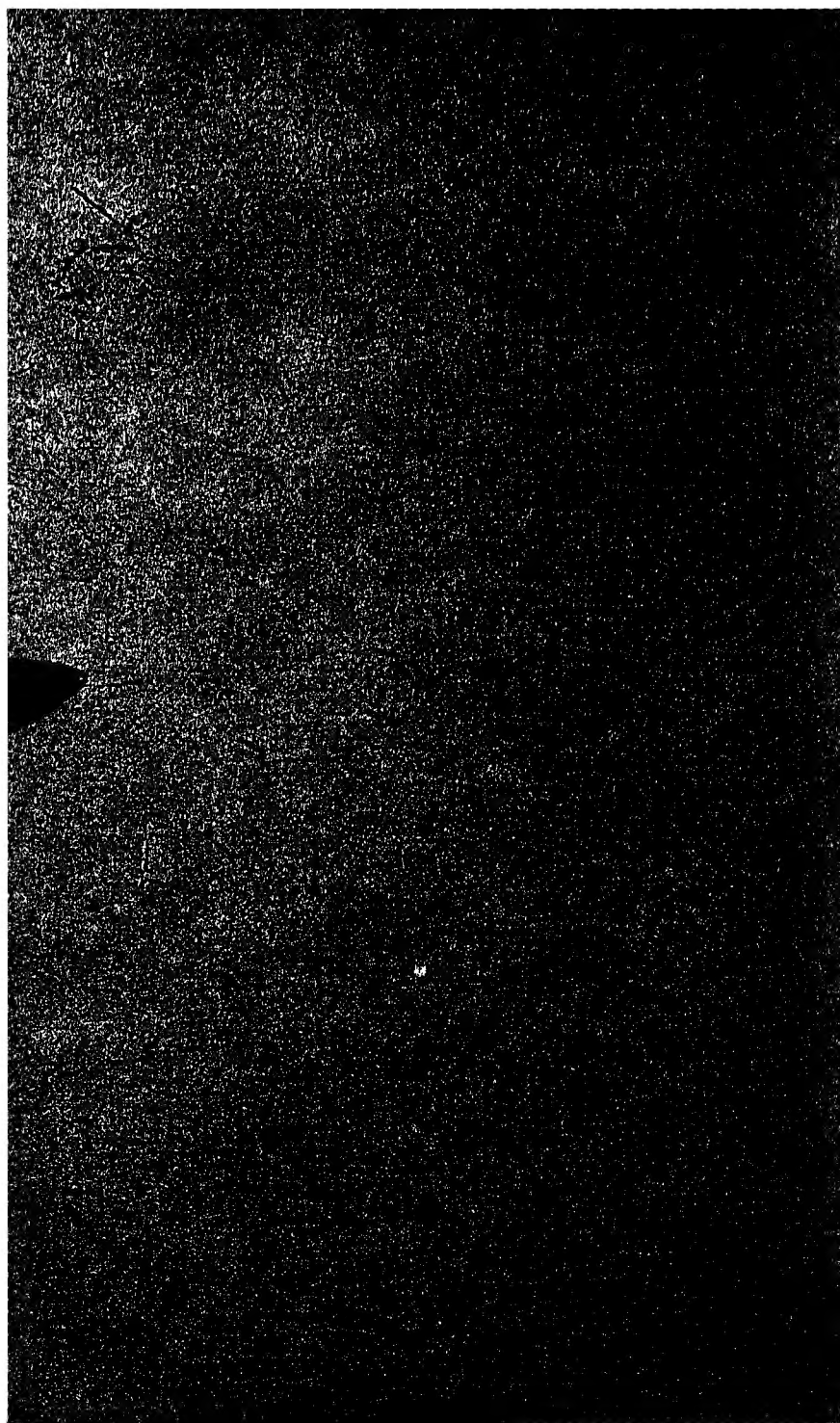
JOHN A. HARRIS

AND A. J. HARRIS

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## PREFATORY STATEMENT

DAYTON, OHIO, U.S.A., January 1, 1903.

To J. OBED SMITH, Esq.,  
Commissioner of Immigration,  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

DEAR SIR,—We append herewith what we style 'A Narrative of Observations on Canada's Great West,' which we submit for your consideration as a report of our trip of investigation through your province of Manitoba and the North-west Territories during August and September of last year.

We also went through to the coast, but only make brief mention of that vast coast-wise province of British Columbia, through which the paths of steel necessarily led us, for the reason that the same is without what is known as the "fertile belt," whose western confines are walled by the many mountains of this province, so prodigiously rich in all save pastoral possibilities, the immediate subject of the appended dissertation.

Our proposed side-trip into the comparatively little known districts of Athabasca and Mackenzie, although every facility for its making, such as the crude methods of

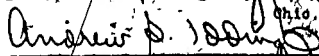
travel at present afford, was offered us, we reluctantly abandoned principally for the lack of time, for all we could possibly spare from the rest of our planned trip was a month, and it was clearly impossible in such brief space to even traverse so vast a territory, much less tarry now and again to make the careful observations we desired.

We hope to make this an exclusive excursion in another year, as undoubtedly its possibilities fully merit. Therefore, all references we make to this region are necessarily founded on inquiries and information thus received, together with such published data as are now available.

Respectfully submitted,



Law Librarian of Montgomery County,  
Ohio



Deputy Clerk of the Supreme Court  
of Ohio.



Judge of the Court of Common Pleas  
of the Second Judicial District  
of Ohio.



A NARRATIVE OF OBSERVATIONS  
ON  
CANADA'S GREAT WEST

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'As it is the commendation of a good huntsman to find game in a wide wood, so it is no imputation if he hath not caught all.'—*Plato*.

All our arrangements completed, a bright August morning found our party of three lounging leisurely in a pullman chair-car *en route* to the boundary city of Detroit, Mich., there to entrain with the Canadian Pacific Railway for a tour of observation and investigation of Canada's Great West.

Although Ohio is a border state, and its farthest limits are but some 200 miles from the international boundary, strange as it would seem, the average Ohioan knows nothing of the colossal size and the resourceful importance of the Dominion of Canada. And this ignorance is alike shared by most of the other states of the Union, the more distant, however, on that very account being less blameworthy. But happily such lack of information is now on the eve of obliteration, and but a few years hence a just recognition will be accorded to our mammoth sister.

Countless citizens of our Republic regard Canada as at most a somewhat lengthy but narrow strip of bordering territory, when the fact is that the Dominion is a little

larger than the total area of the whole of the United States and Alaska, whilst the immense Districts of Assiniboia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Keewatin and Athabasca of its North-west Territories are alone a larger region than all Russia in Europe.

The more to appreciate the whole picture, the more to understand the varied interests of the east, the middle and the distant west, our chosen itinerary took us first east and called for a halt of a day to renew our acquaintance with the bustle and business of the metropolis, Toronto.

The next day found us farther east still, at Ottawa, the Dominion's delightful capital, and ready now to begin our long trek westward to the Pacific.

It is a far cry from Ottawa to the Pacific—five days and nights of continuous travel. An almost tiresome prospect to the uninitiated, but not so to one who has gone and seen. In fact it is questionable if there is anywhere a stretch of country traversed by railroad that for 2,800 miles affords to the traveller a variety of scenes more interesting than that which bounds the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Leaving the throbbing business activity of the east behind at Ottawa, the valley of the Ottawa is traversed, the railway following for miles the course of that magnificent stream, down which puffing tug-boats are here and there drawing rafts of huge logs consigned to the many mills that line the shore.

A wild, wooded, country, beautiful with many lakes, is the next setting on nature's stage. This is the fish and game region of Ontario. Then comes a run of more than fifty miles along the bold rock shores of Lake Superior. Then Nipigon and Thunder Bays, followed by a wild, broken lake country, and Winnipeg—the gateway and

commissary to the whole vast west. Here are eastern bustle and business again. A city flourishing in a prosperous present, with a more flattering future ahead—the Chicago of Canada.



From which west, north-west and south-west, within the arc of a circle having the distance to Calgary as a radius, the international boundary as its southern limit, and a northern limit as yet not positively ascertained, lies a magnificent prairie country, whose possibilities for grain, for grazing and for general mixed farming are incalculably great. Here are millions of acres of land, with a rich, substantial soil, that await but the plough and the seed to bring forth thirty bushels of wheat or seventy-five bushels of oats to the acre. There is little to be wondered at in the reports of recent land sales, aggregating millions of acres, when we consider that such land as this is to be had at from \$3.50 to \$12 an acre.

In the North-west Territories alone the grain bushelage of 1901 was 24,426,158, whilst in Manitoba, the much

older settled region where the acreage under cultivation is vastly larger but the soil no more fertile, the figures in bushels were :—

Wheat.....	50,502,085.
Oats.....	27,796,588
Barley.....	6,536,155
Rye.....	62,261

or a total of..... 84,897,089 bushels.

The past harvest (1902) shows a tremendous increase over even these seemingly fabulous but official figures of 1901. Surely 'the future granary of the world' is an apt appellation for such a region.

Winnipeg is the capital of the province of Manitoba, which takes its name from a large lake within the province similarly styled—Manitoba, or in its true spelling and pronunciation, Manitobah—the 'Spirit of the Narrows.'

The present city is situated on the Red River of the north, at its confluence with the Assiniboine, where almost two centuries ago the intrepid Varenne, Sieur de la Verendrye and his sons established Fort Rouge. It is a place of wonderful activity, a great shipping centre, with about 50,000 inhabitants. Its bank clearances now exceed all Canadian cities except Toronto and Montreal. It is remarkable most of all in that it has sprung from almost nothing within the last 20 years.

Here are the Hudson Bay Company's great department stores, now filled with merchandise for the intelligent settler, but once the fur-trading mart of the pemmican-fed voyageur with meagre wants. Here in the old days, as against the dollar of to-day, the unit of account was the beaver skin, as it is even now in their posts in the far

North country. '1 prime beaver' was the equivalent of 2 marten skins, or 20 muskrats, while the pelt of a silver fox fetched five times the goods.

From Winnipeg a night on the train brought us to Regina, Assiniboia, the capital of the North-west Territories, a thriving little city of some 4,000, with flat, rich prairie wheat-lands all around it. The Executive Council of the Territories, embracing the districts of Assiniboia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Athabasca, meets at Regina, and the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant-Governor, who here resides in a well-appointed Government House, is co-extensive with all these districts. The head-quarters of the North-west Mounted Police are also here, a military and civil organization with a complement when full of 840 stalwart men. These are distributed at intervals throughout the North-west, their duties being to trace and arrest criminals, and to preserve order generally, and are considered the most thorough-going, effective force of its kind in the British Empire.

A day's ride to the north on the Qu'Appelle branch of the railroad brought us to Prince Albert, the road's terminus, a considerable distributing point, admirably and beautifully situated on the banks of the north branch of the swift flowing Saskatchewan, the 'Kisiskatchewan' of the aboriginal Cree, meaning 'swift current.'

We christened this branch railroad the Chamber of Commerce on wheels on account of the numerous land deals attempted and consummated on board train, for along here in the outlying territory is the present scene of a very rapid settlement. And the effort is an intelligent one, for nowhere are there greater prospective and actual grain lands than in the 250 miles this railroad traverses. 'Sas-

katchewan hard wheat is familiarly known as the best and here it is grown to the greatest advantage.

Leaving Regina in the journey northward, we are soon at Lumsden, the station for a promising and growing community of agriculturists, thence onward we went, stopping now and again at different villages, where thrift was always manifest, until Saskatoon, so named after a luscious indigenous berry, was reached. From here access by stage is had to Battleford and its favoured district, but ere long a projected railway will be whirring its way in that direction.

Saskatoon is in Saskatchewan, one of the great districts of the North-west Territories, lying north of Assiniboia and east of Alberta, and is situated on the south branch of the Saskatchewan River. Necessarily the focus point for the business of its vicinity, as well as Battleford, it has fetched together a sizeable community of artisans, storekeepers and the like. As outlying development continues it must needs grow apace.

Further along the train brought up at Dundurn, hardly more than a mere station in the midst of waving grain fields. But it is here one can learn the object lesson of the whole region.

A modern Malachi, unlike his biblical namesake in that as to this being his real name no doubt has ever arisen, has tickled with the help of his kinsfolk and friends the already beneficent adjacent soil with consequences almost out of ken. What a little money and systematically applied energy has accomplished here is a pointer to all newcomers to the region, willing to profit by the experience of successful foregoers.

Rosthern next attracted our notice, as the train momentarily paused there. The building activity at this

place has been and still is very considerable. As a consequence, to the casual onlooker at least, the town is more imposing than many of much more population.

From Rosthern the remaining run to Prince Albert was quickly made. Prince Albert is a thriving town, long a fur-trading centre ere the environs of the Saskatchewan attracted settlers. However, the farming country whose business it drains being singularly good has had the most to do with the making of the present town.

As was the case in our own west, most of the railway towns of Western Canada, (except those like Prince Albert sprung from old fur-trading posts, and invariably placed on navigable waterways), have been located, regardless of natural transportation facilities and rather in the midst of peculiarly fertile tracts, and often away from running water altogether, there to absorb the thrift of the soil's tillers and by such absorption to grow. The country doubtless has been and is presently too exclusively pastoral to justify any other condition. Nevertheless, with the advent sooner or later of industrialism, the lake-board and river towns with consequent superior transportation facilities will absorb the industrials, and must become the growing metropoli of the future, whereas the towns located solely for the immediate agricultural trade regardless of such facilities will fail to secure the industrials, and even find themselves paralyzed by an over-agricultural production demanding outside markets, a threatened menace even now where railroad communication is alone possible. Thus such towns will stand still or mayhap even go backward. The great marts of the future, as in the past, will be on God's liquid highways, else history shall fail to repeat itself.

It is in and about Prince Albert that thousands of acres of land are selling and a great deal of this is going to settlers from the United States. Land that six or eight months ago brought \$3 an acre is selling to-day for \$6 and \$8, with a bright prospect for further advance. Here certainly is a good chance for energetic Americans, and from the numbers coming in it would seem that they are already alive to the opportunity.

The Carrot River country, some thirty or forty miles to the south-east, gives great promise and is attracting a considerable settlement. Further impetus will be given this locality when the projected railroad, now under construction to Prince Albert, is completed.



From Prince Albert along the north shore of the Saskatchewan River we made a several days' drive, tenting by night, in the direction of Edmonton, which is some 300 miles to the west. Having crossed the river in a ferry boat ingeniously and rapidly propelled by the current, we at once struck what is known as the Snake Plains Trail. By noon tea and bacon were greatly relished, supplemented by nature's own dessert of wild strawberries, blueberries and raspberries, growing in the greatest profusion everywhere. The country is alternately open prairie and dense



forest, with innumerable lakes or sloughs (pronounced slews), creeks and larger streams, withal remarkably well watered. It seems to promise wonderfully for mixed farming in the near future, though at present very sparsely settled. South of the river the timbered areas are less frequent. The grass was a revelation to us, our horses standing belly deep in it.

A considerable pile of red deer bones erected on a commanding hill in commemoration of a Blackfeet raid into this country of the Crees, bore silent witness to the fact that we were passing through the ancient battling ground of these once warring Indian tribes.

As we proceeded our fowling-pieces were brought into frequent play, ducks, geese and the like swarming the sloughs, whilst prairie chicken scampered the high grass. Antelope, too, are to be seen now and again.

The second day out we reached the Reserve of the Mistawasis (Big Child) Cree Indians, so named after a former chief. We were then within comparatively short distance of the especially fertile tracts said to exist in and about Redberry and Muskeg Lakes, but how these tracts could be agriculturally better than those through which we had been passing we were unable to surmise. The rich loamy soil wherever a settler had planted in it was prospering him with fields of tall waving grain, more amply headed than any we had ever before seen, ready to be, and in some instances already, harvested.

A stop at the Indian Agency and also at several of the encampments enables us to attest from actual observation as to the neatly kept, well-built agency buildings and the tractable contented condition of these charges of the Canadian Government.

But few full-blood Indians are now met with. In their stead are the half-breeds (shortly styled 'breeds'), some of whom are proving successful farmers, but more, impelled by the wild blood of their forbears, still but rove and hunt the plains the summer through. The solitary tepee or group here and there pitched beside a placid lake or moaning stream is a forceful reminder of aboriginal traits still uppermost. In the winter the more energetic betake themselves to the forests northward (the 'thick wood' of the early fur-trader) there to trap and slay for their pelts the sleek-skinned four-footed denizens until spring calls them back, by a voice persuasively flower-scented, to another heyday on the prairies.

We recrossed the Saskatchewan at Fort Carlton, a memorable post of the old days, but of which no traces now remain. It is only a ferrying point on the trail now. After boiling the kettle and partaking of the noonday lunch we jogged along, and ere night had fallen had reached the settlement at Duck Lake, where we again met the Qu'Appelle branch of the railroad. It was near here that the second of the risings under Riel, known as 'the Northwest Rebellion' began, and some twelve miles from here, viz., at Batoche on the South Saskatchewan it collapsed in the battle fought there on May 12, 1885. Louis Riel, a French half-breed who had led the Red River rebels in 1869 was again the leader. His capture here and subsequent trial and hanging ended all resistance to settlement, and settlers now have nothing to fear from this source.

Begrimed as we were after such a several days' bout with mother earth, we were not averse to dissolving our acquaintance with the comely dame through soap, water,

razors and the like. Therefore once in Duck Lake's principal hostelry, uncommonly well kept for such parts, we closeted ourselves and vigorously overhauled.

The Snake Plains trail, the major part of our travelled route from Prince Albert, is historic in that some of its early followers, such as Franklin and others, were men who are now of imperishable name in Canadian history. Among these, few were more observing than Major-General Sir William F. Butler, who early in 1873 as Captain Butler traversed this North Saskatchewan country and passed thence on across the mountains to the Pacific. In an appendix to his 'Wild North Land,' written the same year, he carefully discussed and determined from his view-point the most feasible route for the Canadian transcontinental railway then under discussion only.

The transcontinental lines now under construction, or projected, when fully built, as they surely will be, will tap the country nearly as Major Butler advised. His remarks then made, fully voice our own observations and gathered ideas, and are therefore especially timely for quotation here. Said he:—

'The experience of those most intimately acquainted with the territory points to a line *north* of the North Saskatchewan as one best calculated to reach the country really fitted for immediate settlement; a country where rich soil, good water, and abundant wood for fuel and building can be easily obtained. All these essentials are almost wholly wanting along the present projected route throughout some 350 miles of its course.

'Now if we take a line from the neighbourhood of the mission of Prince Albert, and continue it through the very rich and fertile country lying twenty or thirty miles to the north of Carlton, and follow it still further to a point fifteen or twenty miles north of Fort Pitt, we will be about the centre of the *true* fertile belt of this portion of


the continent. Continuing north-west for another sixty miles, we would reach the neighbourhood of Lac La Biche (a French mission, where all crops have been most successfully cultivated for many years) and be on the watershed of the Northern Ocean. . . . In the deed of surrender by which the Hudson's Bay Company transferred to the Government of Canada, the territory of the North-west, the fertile belt was defined as being bounded on the north by the North Saskatchewan River. It will yet be found that there are ten acres of fertile land lying *north* of the north Saskatchewan for every one acre lying south of it.

Free grants of lands are still in abundance throughout this region. Any vacant quarter (160 acres) of an odd or even-numbered section, unless reserved for wood lots or other similar purpose, is open for homestead entry by any person the sole head of a family, or any male over the age of 18 years. An entry fee of \$10 is the sole cash outlay, but under the law, homestead duties are to be performed by three years' cultivation and residence, during which period the settler may not be absent for more than six months in any one year, without forfeiting the entry. Residence in the vicinity with parents, on land owned by them, or on land owned by the homesteader himself, is accepted as residence on the homestead.

A day's ride from Duck Lake by train again brought us back to Regina, where another day was pleasantly spent in paying our devoirs to the Lieut.-Governor of the Territories, to several of the other territorial officers, and to the officers of the North-west Mounted Police, whose headquarters, as before mentioned, are here. A dinner the Lieutenant-Governor gave for us was a much appreciated honour.

From Regina the main line of the railroad quickly took us to Moose Jaw, also in Assiniboia, a flourishing city of some three or four thousand inhabitants. It has two good

hotels and other evidences of commercial activity, doubtless stimulated by reason of the 'Soo Line' branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway here joining the main line, the shortest and familiar route from our West to theirs. The city's Indian name is said to mean 'the creek where the white man mended the cart with a moose jawbone.'



About Moose Jaw is a wonderful prairie farm country, many thousands of acres being under careful and highly productive cultivation. Immense many-shared ploughs drawn by cables wound and unwound respectively by two traction engines on drums affixed thereto, the engines being oppositely stationed at the ends of the field to be opened up, and moved evenly ahead until the desired ground is upturned, are employed by one large owner, who not many years ago was an almost penniless homesteader.

From Moose Jaw we went on, via Dunmore Junction and the Crow's Nest Pass branch, to Lethbridge in Alberta, meanwhile passing through some of the best of the ranching country with principal trading centres at Swift Current, Maple Creek and Medicine Hat. 'The Hat,' as it is locally called, with a population of 2,000, is the largest and best of these towns. From here small steamers can descend the South Saskatchewan River, 800 miles to Lake

Winnipeg in Manitoba. Coal is abundant hereabouts, and some natural gas wells with a fair flow have been struck and are being drawn on for different purposes.

It is here on the south, at Lethbridge and its vicinity, that the practical beginninigs already made of an irrigation system which will be a blessing to the country within its scope, and an object lesson to the prairie farmers of Canada.

Lethbridge also has large collieries in operation. A soft coal of excellent quality is mined, and the large output is readily disposed of in the home markets of Manitoba and the Territories.

The first crop of grain grown in the Raymond settlement nearby was threshed last fall. There were 200,000 bushels at Raymond alone, and an equal quantity from the adjoining and earlier settlements of Sterling and Magrath. Wheat drawn to the mill at Raymond from the threshing machines fetched 55 cents a bushel. A beet sugar factory is to be built at Raymond, too, probably in time for next year's crop. Its cost will be more than a half million dollars with a capacity of over four hundred tons of beets per day. An American concern has already been awarded the contract for the machinery. The factory will mean a great deal for Raymond and its surrounding districts. Contracts will be made with the settlers for the planting of patches of beets and the delivery of such crop at a certain price per ton. Five dollars the ton, a good price, it is understood will be guaranteed. Everything points to a favourable issue of the undertaking.

From Lethbridge we went to Macleod, also in Alberta, around which lies an excellent ranching country—favoured

as is by the warm Chinook winds, which render possible the grazing of cattle twelve months in the year.

Leaving Macleod we again veered to the north, arriving at Calgary, after a ride lengthened into the whole of a night by reason of a bloodless railroad accident *en route*.

Calgary with its nearly ten thousand souls is par excellence the best town between Winnipeg and the Coast. Substantially built of fine light gray stone, quarried in the vicinity, its commercial houses have a handsome business-like appearance, and enjoy a commensurate trade. Situated in the foot-hills of the Rocky Mountains, its prospect of their peaks in the dim distance is magnificent.

As the trading centre for the immense outlying stock-raising region and the chief supply station for the many mining camps in the neighbouring mountains of British Columbia, it is no wonder indeed that Calgary is so thriving. As these industries multiply and increase, as they must needs, for as yet they are but in their infancy, the present town bids fair to rival Denver both in point of population and commercial activity. It certainly has the right sort of nucleus about which to grow to any proportion.

Here, in a model brewery, one of the best and most used beers in the North-west is brewed, whilst butter is churned and tinned and eggs sorted and crated in a Government creamery, and thence shipped to the adjacent mining districts, the far Klondike and even to the Orient. There are some nineteen of these creameries in the North-west Territories.

A good class of English have settled hereabouts, many of them scions of Britain's best families; thus the town affords a more refined life than most western cities of recent origin.

From Calgary the same branch railway we had pursued from Macleod ran us north 192 miles to its present terminus at Strathcona, near Edmonton. A moonlight drive in the carryall of the excellent Queen's Hotel, a proverbial name throughout Canada of good hostelry, eventually brought us to Edmonton, until lately known only for its being the principal raw fur mart of the world.

It, too, is situated on the North Saskatchewan River, which here flows many feet below the town in a picturesque ravine. Gold is panned on the river's banks in paying quantities, as it is along several other of the rivers.

New Fort Augustus, maintained as a fur-trading post by the North-west Company until its fusion with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, and previously built for the first-named company by James Hughes, is now Edmonton, around which lies an excellent farming region, rapidly being settled, and to the north and west of which lie the Athabasca, Peace and Smoky River districts, of whose respective merits for farming and grazing we are fully convinced. An average rainfall, more abundant, attracts us from the south country to this of the north, though unquestionably it is all an excellent business proposition,—a wonderful farm region brought within easy reach of the world's markets by a most efficient railway service.

The city is commercially active, in addition to the immediate agricultural influences, as the principal supply depot for the whole vast Northland, stretching away to the far barren grounds and the Arctic Ocean, the haunts of the fur-bearing animals and their hunters and trappers, who, though almost as carnivorous as the animals they destroy, are prodigally fond of the food, fineries and luxuries of civilization. A few pioneer farmers, ranchers and



miners are also already successfully located in this country, who, too, must be supplied with 'worldly goods.' This contingent is increasing and is bound to increase each year, as the region's adaptability to such pursuits becomes better known.

From Edmonton a wagon-road, some 90 miles long, leads to Athabasca Landing on the Athabasca River, which mighty stream with its high pitch-lined banks reaches away to the north, a water highway through hundreds of miles of fertile timbered country. Of this region Somerset in his 'Land of the Muskeg' says, 'The banks, high and choked with dense woods of pine and poplar, advanced and receded with the bending of the stream, dark and sombre, like houses in an ill-lit street.'

Copious springs of salt, petroleum and natural gas are found along the banks of the Athabasca, Clearwater and Slave Rivers, and this country bids fair some day to vie with Pennsylvania, Indiana and Ohio in the production of these valuable commercial adjuncts. The pitch deposits spoken of along the shores, at present made use of only by workmen in caulking the scows of the river, must needs in time take their place amongst other articles of value for export, and even later furnish a nearby supply of that essential ingredient for the asphalt streets of the neighbouring cities of another century. On Lake Athabasca, or, more correctly 'Arabascow, the meeting-place of many waters,' a lake of some 8,000 square miles to the north, into which the Athabasca River empties, Tyrrell found what he describes as 'a veritable mountain of iron ore, of the most valuable kind, hæmatite.' Copper and lead ores are also known to exist in immense quantities to the far north.

Farther west towards the mountains is the land of the Unchagah or Peace River, so called because upon its banks peace was made between the conquering Crees and the Beaver Indians. It was here the Beavers stemmed the Crees' tide of conquest. This river's course of 1,000 miles east by north is through a magnificent country, poetically described by a late observant traveller, who, standing upon a bold bluff overlooking its plains, wrote, 'Below us lay the mighty river winding majestically amongst the little hills and prairies, mile after mile of thickly timbered rolling country stretched out before us in great sweeping lines of hills and valleys. Towards the south-west, where the Smoky River joins the Peace, a great curtain of blue



haze shut out the view. No white man, and but few Indians have ever penetrated this country, or solved the mystery of this perpetual smoke, but it is thought that a burning coal mine must exist upon the river's bank, as no sign of volcanic action has ever been observed in the surrounding district.'

Of the value of this hyperborean country for grain raising and cattle grazing there can be no question, the limit of the economical culture of wheat being scientifically and actually placed as far north as Fort Liard and its

vicinity on the 60th parallel, which limit as the ground is broken must needs by the attendant climatic changes be pushed even some degrees further north: The Red River, Saskatchewan and Peace River country, south of the 60th parallel is the great fertile section, in that nine-tenths of the land is fit for cultivation.

As to the apparently illimitable timber north of Prince Albert and Edmonton, only awaiting the axe and hum of mills. Of the existence there of much merchantable timber we are satisfied. True, British Columbia, so close at hand, with its unparalleled wealth of the best timber as yet only meagrely logged, will have a tendency to deter the logging of the forests of this north country: The lumber there, thus preserved, must, however, sooner or later prove a blessing to the peoples of the country of the Saskatchewan,

'When, by his side  
Great cities shall arise.'

The Athabasca, Peace and tributary rivers, dark with logs, thence quickly transported from the landing by railroad to the busy marts but a short distance away, are but a dream now that brief time will change into reality. And then such of this northland wood as is unfit for building and other kindred purposes will no doubt find its way into huge pulp mills, conveniently located, there to be refashioned, and rendered useful to man in a thousand different forms and ways.

Nature, not content that the waters of three oceans, the Atlantic, Arctic and Pacific, should lave respectively Canada's eastern, northern and western sides, and that its southern middle should shore in part all but one of those vast inland seas, the Great Lakes, has studded and labyrinthized its body with the grandest and most extensive sys-

tem of lakes and rivers, both large and small, the world possesses, a number of which are so connected as to make up several of the most feasible inland waterways that commerce has as yet not fully embraced in its world-wide grasp.

Here mighty rivers and soundless lakes await but the coming of a sufficient population to cause their wild waters to be further bestirred by the whirring propellers of many ships, full laden and low riding, where once naught but the voyageurs' graceful canoe and the aborigines' less graceful counterpart were wont noiselessly to skim, and even now are their sole subjugators, save an occasional fur-burdened packet or trader's scow. These natural highways must soon render their fullest measure of assistance in the problem of transportation.

The Earl of Dufferin, then Governor General, on a visit to Manitoba and the North-west Territories in 1877, being entertained by the Mayor and Town Council of Winnipeg, delivered an address in which he referred to the extent and beauties of the 'fluvial' system of Canada, outlining a water course as follows:—

Ascend the St. Lawrence to Lake Ontario, thence the Great Lakes to Thunder Bay on Lake Superior. From there via the River Kaministiquia, Lake Shebandowan, Rainy Lake and River into Lake of the Woods, thence via Winnipeg River to Winnipeg, thence Red River to Lake Winnipeg, 300 miles long by 60 wide. At the north-west angle of Lake Winnipeg the mouth of the Saskatchewan is met, thence 1,500 miles of navigable water to the mountains.

'This great water system, in keeping with the immense plateau which it traverses, not only affords means of communication, and carries fertility with it, but at the same time tempers the summer's heat and winter's cold, and in its pure waters purifies the air, so that Canada may be said to be free from the agues and malarial fevers which prevail where extreme heat and stagnant waters abound.'

'The navigation of the Saskatchewan will probably prove to be nearly as useful as that of the Ohio, but less liable, on account of its greater volume, to interruption from low water, to which the navigation of the Ohio is very subject in the dry months of summer.'

'For though, betimes, he seems to sink  
Amidst his prairies pale,  
He swells with pride  
In summer-tide,  
When low-born rivers fail'

'Open the Bay' has been the slogan of many of Canada's statesmen and the theme for an inspiring poem. Churchill and Nelson on the Hudson's Bay must sooner or later become the sea-ports for the European exports and imports of Western Canada, as well as for the transcontinental route from Europe to the Orient.

Between Winnipeg and Liverpool, via Hudson's Bay, there would be a saving of inland carriage, as compared with the route via New York or Halifax, of about 2,000 miles, whilst Liverpool to Japan, via New York and San Francisco is 12,078 miles, as against Liverpool to Japan via Port Nelson and the Canadian Pacific Railway to Burrard Inlet (on the Pacific), 9,734 miles, or a saving in miles of 2,352. (See Stanford's Compendium.) San Francisco is nearer Churchill than it is to Chicago, a momentous geographical fact.

It is understood that science has so defeated the icy grasp of winter in our own Straits of Mackinac in the Great Lakes as to admit of navigation there the year round, and that the same has been done by the Russians in the Baltic Sea, and the White Sea at Archangel.

The similar conditions in the Hudson's Bay should be as readily overcome.

The insect life of the North-west during the warm months, all too abundant in many sections for the complete happi-

ness of man and beast, is noticeably and comfortably less in the better settled and more cultivated portions, a bolstering fact to the claims of many entomologists that the advance of settlement will diminish the insectean myriads in somewhat the same manner as it annihilated the 'bison billions' who formerly 'battered' in these very same regions.

Croppings of coal are general throughout the prairie country, located providentially near the present and future areas of settlement, there to supply for ages by the simplest mining a cheap fuel for an ever-increasing population. Geologists are satisfied that most of the veins are of great depth, but it will be many years before the bowels of the earth need be ransacked, so abundant is the surface supply. Near Edmonton the coal veins are especially good and such is undoubtedly the case now and again even in the farther North.

To dwell on fuel naturally excites inquiry as to the rigours of winter here. The summer months are long and of an even comfortable temperature. Because of geographical situation the length of daylight in the growing season is from fifteen to eighteen hours, a wonderful maker of hardy crops. In the winter the thermometer must needs descend, and so it does to a perceptible degree, but we learn that a short residence so acclimates that the rigours are less felt than in the older and milder east. Much of this condition is no doubt due to a drier climate which necessarily averts the piercing penetration of the cold as experienced in moister zones. The Chinooks, too, warm winds of scientific fact but fanciful or unknown origin, are nevertheless, as before observed, appreciably felt in many quarters, and even 'tis said as far north as the Mackenzie Basin

Professor Macoun, in summing up the seasons, has said :—

‘The progress of the seasons and the labours of the husbandman, throughout the North-west, may be summed up as follows :—Early in April the hot sun dissipates the slight covering of snow, and almost immediately ploughing commences, as, after the frost is out six inches, spring work may begin. Seeding and ploughing go on together, as the ground is quite dry, and in a few days the seed germinates owing to the hot sunshine. By the time the rains and heat of June have come, abundance of roots have formed and the crop rushes to quick maturity.

‘After the middle of August the rains almost cease, and for ten weeks scarcely a shower of rain falls, giving the farmer ample time for harvesting. These general characteristics apply to the climate of the whole North-west, and the same results are everywhere observed over tracts embracing 300,000 square miles of territory. One important result of this peculiar climate is the hardness and increased weight of the grain. Another, equally important, is the production of natural hay, on which horses and cattle thrive much better than when fed on made hay. All stock-raisers know that it is not cold that injures cattle or horses, but those storms of sleet or soft snow which are so common in the eastern provinces. Such storms as those are never seen in the North-west; and the cattle are never wet from November to April.

‘Many intelligent persons are afraid of the winters of the North-west, because they estimate the effect of the cold by the thermometer instead of by the humidity of the atmosphere. J. A. Wheelock, Commissioner of Statistics for Minnesota, wrote as follows concerning the atmosphere of that State, over twenty years ago :—‘The dryness of the air in Minnesota permits a lower range of temperature without frosts than in moist climates. The thermometer has frequently been noticed at twenty degrees without material injury to vegetation. In the damp summer evenings of Illinois and Ohio, for example, the heat passes off rapidly from the surface of the earth and from plants. Frosts develop under such circumstances at a comparatively high temperature. The constant bath of moisture has softened the delicate covering and enfeebled the vitality of plants; and thus a fall of the thermometer, which in

Minnesota would be as harmless as a summer dew, in Ohio would sweep the fields like a fire."

'What Wheelock says of Minnesota, is equally true of the North-west Territories, and more so, as they are certainly dryer than it. Dry air is a non-conductor of heat, and as the dryness increases with the lowering temperature, the increasing cold is not felt by either animals or plants, and we find a solution to the paradox, that, although water may freeze, vegetation is not injured, except when a humid atmosphere is in immediate contact with it. The increase of dryness in the air has the same effect as an increase of warm clothing for man and beast, and we suffered less from a temperature of 10 degrees below zero, lying in tents without fire, than we would have done in Ontario with 10 degrees of frost. Without the aid of a thermometer no one would believe the cold was so intense.

'There is then in this region a dry, clear, cold winter, a dry spring with bright sunshine, a warm summer with abundance of rain, but not necessarily a cloudy sky, and a dry serene autumn, with possibly a snowstorm about the Equinox.'

The following interesting excerpts from the diary of Alexander Henry, a fur-trader of the old North-west Company, show, too, an early opening of spring, as far back as 1800, long before the climatic mollification due to tillage began:—

March 27, 1800—Mosquitoes began to plague us.

April 11, 1800—Weather excessively hot, Wild pigeons passing north in great abundance.

March 9, 1801—Saw the first spring bird.

March 23, 1801—Now see many kinds of summer birds.

April 11 & 12, 1801—Fine warm weather. Frogs began to croak.

March 2, 1808—Saw a vulture for the first time this season, the earliest I ever saw on this river. (Pembina, noting entree of spring.)

In this connection also, Major Butler says:

'With regard to the climate of the country lying east of the mountains, those who have followed me through my journey will remember the state in which I found the prairies of Chimeroo (on the Peace River near St. Johns) on the 22nd and 23rd of April, 1873, snow all gone and mosquitoes already at work. . . . I have looked from



the ramparts of Quebec on the second last-day of April, and seen the wide landscape still white with the winter's snow.

'A country of almost boundless extent, with a climate like this and a soil of astounding fertility, may well be described in the words of Lord Beaconsfield as a land of "illimitable possibilities."—(Macoun.)

After the prairies the mountains! We shall not criticise nature's handiwork anywhere. It is all beautiful. But incalculably more inspiring than a wooded lake country, the rocky shore of a mighty body of water, such as Superior, an almost boundless field of waving grain, or a slightly rolling prairie, dazzling with the variagated tints of odorous wild roses, harebells, thistles and a hundred other floral species, more inspiring than these, we say, is a mountain, massive, majestic, towering mapshap 10,000 feet heavenward, green and gray and snowy white, with perhaps a halo of clouds on a gloomy day. Our first real appreciation of the Canadian Rockies came to us at Banff. One wants to touch the scenery there to satisfy himself that it actually is real. On all sides you are hemmed in by magnificence. Green and gray and white and blue are the controlling colours. The towering trees and the waters are green, the rocks rough and jagged are gray, the snow and the clouds are white, and the sky is blue. Beyond Banff are Laggan with its wonderful mountains, its Victoria glacier and its unrivalled 'Lakes in the Clouds,' Field and the beautiful 'Yoho Valley'; the great glacier of the Illecillewaet; Revelstoke and other mountain resorts of more or less note—all beautiful beyond description.

At all of these the accommodations afforded at the hotels and chalets of the Canadian Pacific are most palatial and comfortable, while the waters of the Banff Hot Springs are justly famed for their healing properties.

Beyond the mountains the beautiful Thompson and Fraser canyons are traversed; and beyond these are Vancouver, the Straits of Georgia, Victoria and the Pacific.

There can be nothing more delightful than varying and breaking the return trip at Sicamous by a few days spent on Lake Okanagan and in the beautiful valley which surrounds it—its atmosphere scented by the luscious apples, plums and peaches of its mammoth fruit ranches—or in the mountains (the Gold Range) which in turn surround the valley. Compared to it and to the Arrow and Kootenay



Lakes (through which our route lay from Revelstoke to Dunsmuir a few weeks later by way of the Crow's Nest Pass Railway), Lake Champlain and Lake George are as naught.

Here in the Okanagan country, too, at Kelowna, we were treated to a delightful taste of the country life and hospitality of the English gentlefolk, transplanted in these distant and beautiful surroundings, with the attendant tennis, polo, golf and other refined sports.

In passing, it is not amiss to note the grandeur of the mountain scenery of the Crow's Nest Pass route, dwarf-like in comparison with the sublimities of the main line

but averaging well with much of the best similar scenery of Europe. Many unwillingly cross the seas for just such or lesser sights, their hearts quaking at the sight of the boundless waters, in ignorance of what their own continent possesses.

Of the mineral wealth of these mountain regions too much is already known to justify discussion here.

Of the known mining districts in the mountains of north-west Canada, those of the Kootenay and the Yale and Cariboo are by far the richest, with Nelson, Rossland and Slocan City as their centres. The largest deposits are of galena, silver, lead, gold and copper.

Farther east on the Crow's Nest Pass road in the Rockies at Fernie, are vast coal mines and some 300 coking furnaces, which as our train whisked by were belching forth fire into the night like mighty minions of hell.



From Dunmore, where we met the main line again, back to Ottawa one is given the opportunity of delving deeper into the beauties of the country already too hurriedly seen on the outward journey.

The general literacy and urbanity of the people, so noticeable, bespeaks volumes for the educational system of the country and the stamp of men who make up its citizenship.

The law and order, everywhere so soundly established, is a sad commentary on the laxity and outlawry pervading the border states of the Union. Safety of property and inviolability of person are rarely tampered with, for designing offenders have learned to know that the meting of justice is swift, sure and sufficient, thanks to an admirable judiciary, appointive and free from political entanglements, and that rare body, the North-west Mounted Police, with its less known British Columbia counterpart, the provincial constabulary.

Of the Canadian North-west, as a game field little need be said, for it is well known that game and fish, big and small, are naturally and actually there in greater abundance than perhaps elsewhere on the continent of North America. The sections most frequented by the various species are minutely and truthfully shown on a 'Sportsman's Map,' corrected to date, a free publication of the railway.

There must be added to what has already been said a few closing words as to the Canadian Pacific Railway itself. It is a mammoth corporation with a magnificent present and a greater future. Western and north-western Canada owe it an everlasting debt; it has made them.

